United Nations S/2014/190

Security Council

Distr.: General
14 March 2014

Original: English

Second report of the Secretary-General submitted pursuant to paragraph 6 of resolution 2110 (2013)

I. Introduction

1. In paragraph 6 of its resolution 2110 (2013), the Security Council requested me to report to it every four months on progress made towards fulfilling the mandate of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq (UNAMI). The present report covers key political and security developments related to Iraq and provides an update on the activities of the United Nations in Iraq since the issuance of my report dated 13 November 2013 (S/2013/661).

II. Summary of key political developments pertaining to Iraq

A. Internal developments

2. During the reporting period, Iraq witnessed a significant deterioration in the security situation, especially in Anbar and adjacent governorates, owing to the increased activity of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, which prompted the Government of Iraq to intensify operations against terrorists and militant groups in Anbar. Despite the security challenges and continued political stalemate, preparations are on track for the Council of Representatives elections scheduled for 30 April 2014.

3. Between 14 November 2013 and 1 March 2014, at least 2,221 civilians (including civilian police) were killed in Iraq and 4,157 were wounded. In 2013, UNAMI recorded the highest number of civilian casualties since 2008, with 7,818 people killed and 17,981 injured. The governorates worst affected by violence were Anbar, Baghdad, Ninewa, Salah al-Din and Diyala. Terrorist attacks directly targeted civilians and public places, including cafés, parks, restaurants, mosques and markets.

4. On 25 November 2013, the Governor of Anbar, Ahmad Khalaf al-Dulaimi, met with the Prime Minister of Iraq, Nuri al-Maliki, to negotiate an end to the year-long demonstrations. Although the Government agreed to respond to some of the demands, the protestors decided to continue to carry out sit-ins until all their demands were met. On 21 December, during an operation by Iraqi security forces against terrorist and armed opposition groups' training camps in Anbar, a division commander was killed, among others. On 22 December, the Iraqi security forces

Please recycle

launched Operation Revenge for Commander Mohammed, in Anbar, while the Prime Minister called upon the demonstrators to withdraw. On 25 December, during his meeting with local tribes from Anbar, the Acting Minister of Defence, Saadoun al-Dulaimi, warned of potential raids against the sit-in camps where terrorists were allegedly hiding.

5. On 28 December, in Ramadi, the Iraqi security forces raided the house of Ahmad al-Alwani, a member of the Council of Representatives with close links to the demonstrators, while executing an arrest warrant on his brother, Ali Suleyman al-Alwani, on terrorism charges. Ahmad al-Alwani was arrested, while his brother and several family members and bodyguards were killed in an exchange of fire. In protest, a large number of local residents took to the streets, which led to armed clashes with security forces in Ramadi and Falluja. On 29 December, the Acting Minister of Defence negotiated with the Governor of Anbar, governorate council representatives and tribal leaders the dismantling of the sit-in camp in Ramadi. On 30 December, the camp was dismantled with the assistance of the local police. There are conflicting reports as to whether there were armed clashes during this process. Subsequently, 44 Sunni members of the Council of Representatives suspended their participation in the Council, and only a few resumed their participation afterwards. A number of actors reacted by claiming that the Social Peace Initiative had collapsed, as it had been overshadowed by the situation in Anbar. The Speaker of the Council of Representatives, Osama al-Nujaifi, announced his withdrawal from the Initiative.

6. Between 30 December and 4 January, the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, supported by ex-Baathist groups and allied tribesmen, took control of Ramadi and Falluja and pushed towards Abu Ghraib, in Baghdad governorate, taking over 70 Iraqi security forces checkpoints from the north of Babil governorate to the south of Salah al-Din governorate. In Ramadi, the Iraqi security forces successfully collaborated with a number of local tribal militias, including Awakening Councils, and retook control of most of the city on 7 January. The Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant and allied militants, however, still controlled large parts of the city of Falluja and were conducting attacks in and around Ramadi at the time of writing the present report.

7. Terrorist and armed opposition groups continued to test the readiness and ability of the Iraqi security forces, which remain stretched as they control internal security and patrol Iraq's borders with the Syrian Arab Republic at the same time. In the meantime, sectarian incidents continue to result in forced displacements, civilian abductions and killings from illegal checkpoints.

8. Iraqi political leaders have made efforts to defuse the crisis in Anbar. On 8 January, the leader of the Islamic Supreme Council of Iraq, Ammar al-Hakim, proposed the "steadfast Anbar initiative", which included the allocation of $4 billion over four years for reconstruction and development projects in Anbar, the allocation of a special budget to support tribes and the formation of a tribal force to defend the governorate that would eventually be integrated into the Iraqi security forces.

9. On 28 January, the Moutahidoun Coalition, led by the Speaker of the Council of Representatives announced a six-point road map calling for: (a) an immediate cessation of air strikes and shelling against cities in Anbar and the withdrawal of the army from populated areas; (b) the restoration of local government operations and police forces in Falluja, in cooperation with local tribes; (c) humanitarian assistance

for and the return of displaced families; (d) amnesty for local residents carrying weapons in self-defence; (e) the recruitment of a minimum of 20,000 residents into the local police force; and (f) the compensation of those affected by military action and reconstruction support to the governorate.

10. Following Prime Minister al-Maliki's visit to Anbar on 15 February, the Council of Ministers adopted a plan to boost security and stability in Anbar by increasing support to both the governorate and local tribes. The plan includes providing funds for reconstruction and compensation for damaged property, integrating tribesmen who have fought alongside the Government into the local police and resettling displaced families.

11. Terrorist attacks have also occurred in the outskirts of Baghdad International Airport. On 31 January, four rockets landed on the airport terminal, damaging two Iraqi Airways aircraft and causing injuries to two civilians. During the reporting period, five waves of coordinated attacks occurred in Baghdad, including two suicide attacks near the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 5 February. Two indirect fire attacks targeted the international zone. On 4 February, one rocket round landed in the southern sector of the zone; two more rounds were launched a day later, one of which landed close to a checkpoint in the south-western corner of the zone while the other landed outside the zone's northern perimeter.

12. Electoral preparations are largely on track despite the deteriorating security situation. On 28 January, the Council of Representatives rejected a bill calling for the formation of a parliamentary committee to observe the performance of the Independent High Electoral Commission. At the time of writing the present report, the number of coalitions for the Council of Representatives' elections confirmed by the Commission stood at 36. Unlike the 2010 elections, when Shiite parties were divided into two main camps, namely the National Coalition and the State of Law Coalition, in 2014 the larger Shiite parties will compete as part of five coalitions: the State of Law Coalition, the Citizen Bloc, the Ahrar Bloc, the National Reform Coalition and Fadhila. The Ahrar Bloc will run independently of Muqtada al-Sadr, who in mid-February announced his withdrawal from politics. The "cross-sectarian" Iraqiya Coalition has split into three distinct components: al-Wataniya, led by former Prime Minister Iyad Allawi, and two predominantly Sunni coalitions, namely the Moutahidoun Coalition and al-Arabiya, of Deputy Prime Minister Saleh al-Mutlaq. For the first time, Kurdish parties will run separately in the Kurdistan Region's governorates. Kurdish parties, with the exception of Gorran, will run together only in Salah al-Din governorate. At the time of writing the present report, 494 candidates were disqualified on de-Baathification grounds and another 69 were disqualified on criminal grounds.

13. On 18 November, the Kurdistan Regional Government confirmed that the governorate council elections in Dohuk, Erbil and Suleymaniya would take place on 30 April. On 2 January, the Independent High Electoral Commission concluded its accreditation of political entities and coalitions for the elections. In total, 17 political entities and 1 coalition were accredited. There will be 718 candidates, including 224 women, running for 81 seats.

14. Following parliamentary elections in the Kurdistan Region on 21 September, however, discussions on the formation of a broad-based coalition government including the Kurdistan Democratic Party, the Patriotic Union of Kurdistan, the Gorran Movement and the two main Islamic parties, have not been concluded yet.

Balancing the allocation of senior ministerial and parliamentary posts among the parties has proved to be a significant challenge. The current Kurdistan Regional Government continues to rule in a caretaker capacity.

15. As for relations between the authorities in Erbil and those in Baghdad, the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region, Nechirvan Barzani, has led a delegation in three rounds of talks in Baghdad with the Government of Iraq to resolve the dispute over hydrocarbon revenue sharing, which is a critical component of the 2014 draft federal budget. The Kurdistan Regional Government has contended that it is entitled to 17 per cent of the federal budget, while the Government of Iraq has maintained that the figure is lower once sovereign expenditures have been deducted.

16. In another development, the Council of Ministers agreed in mid-January to turn Tuz Khormatu, Falluja and the Ninewa Plain districts into three new separate governorates. An interministerial committee is assessing the technical and legal dimensions of the decision. Turkmen and Christian leaders have welcomed the decision, which they consider would enhance security and social cohesion in the three districts. A number of other districts have come forward with similar requests, including Halabja in Suleymaniya, Tal Afar in Ninewa, Sadr City in Baghdad, Rifai in Thi-Qar, Zubair in Basra and Sowaira and Aziziya in Wassit.

17. On 28 January, in response to protests from oil-producing governorates, the Council of Ministers adjusted oil revenue allocations in the 2014 draft federal budget from $1 to $5 per barrel for each oil-producing governorate to cover expenditures on services and the environmental consequences of oil production.

B. Regional and international developments

18. The ongoing conflict in the Syrian Arab Republic has had an adverse impact on the security, humanitarian and political situation in Iraq. The expanding campaign of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, whose stated aim is the establishment of an Islamic State in Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic, has prompted the Government of Iraq to call upon the international community to support the counter-terrorism efforts of Iraq. On 15 January, the Prime Minister appealed to countries in the region to impede the financial transactions of the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant. At the Second International Humanitarian Pledging Conference on Syria, held in Kuwait on 15 January, the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Hoshyar Zebari, pledged a contribution from Iraq of $13 million to assist Syrian refugees and internally displaced Syrians. The Minister for Foreign Affairs also participated in the opening of the conference on the Syrian Arab Republic held in Montreux, Switzerland, on 22 January, where he called for a Syrian-led political solution to the conflict, warned that foreign extremists were becoming increasingly powerful and emphasized that the Syrian Arab Republic must be supported and protected against violence and terrorism.

19. Iraq-Kuwait relations continued to improve during the reporting period. On 15 and 16 December, the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq visited Kuwait to attend the third meeting of the joint ministerial committee and signed bilateral agreements on the protection of investment and on tourism. On 18 December, I met with the Permanent Representatives to the United Nations of Iraq and Kuwait, who submitted to me the bilateral agreement on the joint administration of navigation in the Khor Abdallah waterway for registration as a treaty pursuant to Article 102 of

the Charter of the United Nations. On 20 November, Kuwait Airways resumed passenger flights between Najaf and Kuwait City for the first time since 1990.

20. On 20 November, six mortar rounds landed in northern Saudi Arabia at the border with Iraq in an attack claimed by Jaysh al-Mukhtar, a militant group in southern Iraq. On 24 November, the Government of Iraq condemned the attack, while expressing an interest in strengthening bilateral cooperation on border security. Such interest was reaffirmed during a meeting between the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Iraq and the Deputy Minister of Defence of Saudi Arabia, Prince Salman bin Sultan bin Abdulaziz, on the margins of the Manama Dialogue held from 6 to 8 December. On 3 February, Saudi Arabia adopted a new anti-terror law, which was welcomed by the Prime Minister of Iraq.

21. The Prime Minister visited Tehran on 4 and 5 December, right after the reopening of the Sumar border crossing between Iran (Islamic Republic of) and Iraq, which had been closed for 30 years. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss ways to strengthen bilateral relations in the areas of energy, culture and trade, as well as regional developments.

III. Update on the activities of the United Nations Assistance Mission for Iraq and the United Nations country team

A. Political activities

22. My Special Representative continued to advocate for unity and dialogue among all Iraqi leaders on political and security issues, as well as for the implementation of measures that advance social cohesion, democratic governance and the rule of law. Since the start of the crisis in Anbar, my Special Representative has held numerous meetings with Iraqi political leaders calling for unity and underlining the need for the local government and tribal leaders to support counter-terrorism efforts. He also urged the Government of Iraq to exercise restraint in the conduct of its military operations and take all necessary measures to ensure the protection of civilians.

23. On 9 January, my Special Representative briefed the Security Council on the situation in Anbar. He called on the Security Council to support Iraq in its struggle against terrorism and encourage inclusive policies and democratic consolidation. The Council subsequently adopted a presidential statement on the matter (S/PRST/2014/1). On 11 January, the Government of Iraq issued a statement expressing appreciation to the international community, including the Council, for supporting Iraq in combatting terrorism. From 26 to 29 January, my Special Representative visited Doha and Abu Dhabi to discuss ways to enhance relations between Iraq and its neighbours. Earlier, on 5 and 6 December, my Special Representative visited Brussels to brief the Political and Security Committee of the European Union on recent developments in Iraq.

24. During the reporting period, my Special Representative held a series of meetings with Iraqi political leaders, stressing the importance of holding parliamentary elections on time throughout Iraq and refraining from any actions or statements that may delay or undermine the process. On 8 January, my Special Representative met with the Chairman of the Board of Commissioners of the

Independent High Electoral Commission to discuss preparations for the elections and the governorate council elections in the Kurdistan Region.

25. On 13 January, I visited Baghdad and met with a number of senior officials, including the Prime Minister, the Vice President, the Speaker of the Council of Representatives, the Minister for Foreign Affairs and the Chairman of the Independent High Electoral Commission. In addition, I visited Erbil, on 14 January, where I met with the President and the Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region. I urged senior Iraqi leaders to unite in tackling the security challenges and reiterated the importance of addressing the root causes of violence and unrest, including long-standing grievances and the unachieved political reconciliation. I was assured of the political leaders' determination to hold the elections, as scheduled, on 30 April. I also reiterated that there is no alternative to a united, federal and democratic Iraq and encouraged the leaders in Baghdad and Erbil to reach agreement on several constitutional issues, including revenue-sharing and security arrangements.

26. As part of the commitment of UNAMI to support women's political participation in accordance with Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), my Special Representative met with the State Minister for Women's Affairs on 12 December to discuss key developments in support of women's rights, including a national action plan on the implementation of the resolution and the National Strategy on the Advancement of Women. At a conference on women and peace held on 17 January under the auspices of the Vice President's Social Peace Initiative, my Deputy Special Representative stressed the need to empower women economically and politically in peacebuilding. On 6 February, the Government of Iraq launched a national action plan to implement Security Council resolution 1325 (2000), the first of its kind in the Middle East and North Africa.

B. Electoral assistance

27. Despite the security challenges and continued political stalemate, preparations are on track for the Council of Representatives' elections scheduled for 30 April. The Independent High Electoral Commission has made progress on the regulatory framework and electoral procedures, the voter registry, the approval of political entities and lists of candidates and other technical preparations, including the recruitment and training of polling staff and the procurement of election materials.

28. On 9 December, the exercise to register voters and update their data concluded with a higher participation rate compared with all previous exercises of that nature. More than 4 million voters (20 per cent of the total) visited the voter registration centres and 6 per cent of those voters updated their data. The process was monitored by 852 agents of political entities throughout Iraq.

29. The Independent High Electoral Commission printed and has started distributing 22 million electronic voter cards throughout Iraq and is conducting the initial phase of an exercise to collect voters' biometric data. It is expected that the distribution of the cards will be completed by 20 April. The United Nations integrated electoral assistance team has worked with the Commission on relevant mitigating measures and safeguards to address potential issues related to the decision to make the card a mandatory requirement for voting.

30. Special voting is scheduled to take place on 28 April. In coordination with the Ministry of Defence and the Ministry of the Interior and other security institutions, the Commission has finalized the special voter list for the security forces, which contains 1.02 million names. Preparations are also under way for out-of-country registration and voting, which will take place on 27 and 28 April in 19 countries.

31. UNAMI, in consultation with the Commission, is expanding its electoral assistance capacity in Erbil and could also cover Kirkuk if necessary. UNAMI continues to facilitate communication and the sharing of information with interested actors in order to encourage and strengthen observation of the 2014 electoral processes by national entities.

32. UNAMI, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women continued discussions with a view to supporting the Commission, with a focus on women's participation in the upcoming elections through the Gender Elections Task Force.

C. Human rights developments and activities

33. The ethnic and religious groups of Iraq continued to suffer from acts of violence, insecurity and other barriers to their full and equal participation in the political, economic and social life of the country. UNAMI confirmed that Turkmen, Christians, Yezidi, Shabaks and others, not only Shiites and Sunnis, had been targeted specifically in terrorist attacks throughout the reporting period. The draft bill on the protection of the rights of minorities remained under review by the Council of Ministers during the reporting period. The Council of Representatives had agreed to revise the bill in accordance with the concerns raised by UNAMI and civil society groups. On 17 and 18 November, UNAMI, in partnership with the High Commission for Human Rights of Iraq and the parliamentary Human Rights Committee, held a conference on advancing the rights of Iraq's ethnic and religious groups, which resulted in a declaration of principles.

34. On the rule of law, UNAMI has serious concerns about the arrests and detentions that have been carried out, particularly those carried out pursuant to the Anti-Terrorism Law (No. 13 of 2005). UNAMI continues to receive reports of individuals being arrested during security operations without any evidence indicating guilt, of individuals being held in prolonged detention without charge, sometimes for as long as five years, and of detainees, both men and women, held in facilities run by the Ministry of the Interior being tortured and ill-treated to extract confessions that justify charge, trial and conviction. UNAMI is negotiating an agreement with the Ministry of the Interior to obtain unfettered access so that it can monitor places of detention under the Ministry's authority. UNAMI has continued to monitor prisons and places of detention under the authority of the Ministry of Justice. While noting continued improvement of infrastructure and basic services for prisoners in many facilities, UNAMI remains concerned about the lack of appropriate medical facilities in some prisons; the provision of such facilities is the responsibility of the Ministry of Health.

35. On the conduct of criminal trials, particularly in relation to individuals charged under the Anti-Terrorism Law, UNAMI has observed that frequently the courts fail to adhere to fair trial standards, even refusing to investigate or evaluate claims by accused persons that confessions had been obtained through the use of torture. It has

also observed the courts' reliance on the untested testimony of secret informants to support convictions, which, in many cases has led to death sentences.

36. Iraq has continued to carry out death sentences. A total of 177 executions were carried out in 2013, most of which were carried out under the Anti-Terrorism Law. During the reporting period, Iraq executed 30 persons (all men), 28 of whom were convicted under the Anti-Terrorism Law.

37. UNAMI, UNDP and the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS) have continued to support the work of the High Commission for Human Rights of Iraq. On 22 January, my Special Representative launched a new capacity-building programme to assist the Commission in the implementation of its mandate. The programme is funded by the European Union and is to be implemented jointly by UNOPS and UNAMI. Despite the Commission's failure to elect a president or to establish main offices in Baghdad or in the governorates, thereby limiting Iraqis' access to its services, the Commission has carried out a number of activities, including the monitoring of prisons and of the human rights situation in Syrian refugee camps, and facilitated an agreement with the Independent Board of Human Rights of the Kurdistan Region for the preparation of the report to be submitted in the framework of the universal periodic review in October 2014.

38. Attacks on media professionals have continued. On 24 November, a journalist was killed by unidentified gunmen in al-Majmouaa al-Taqafiya, a neighbourhood of Mosul. On 5 December, unidentified gunmen shot dead a prominent Kurdish journalist, Kawa Garmiyani, outside his house in Kalar, Garmiyan district, Suleymaniya governorate; Mr. Garmiyani had been reporting on local government corruption and nepotism. The Prime Minister of the Kurdistan Region established a committee to monitor the police's investigation into the assassination, which was widely condemned and sparked demonstrations across the Kurdistan Region. On 23 December, an unidentified armed group carried out a complex attack on the Salah al-Din satellite and radio channel in Tikrit, resulting in the deaths of five media workers and injuries to 10 more. UNAMI issued several statements condemning such attacks, calling upon the authorities to conduct independent investigations to bring the perpetrators to justice and to ensure the respect and protection of media professionals.

39. Women throughout Iraq continue to be subjected to domestic and other forms of violence, including so-called "honour crimes". A family protection law aimed at protecting individuals from domestic violence is still under negotiation in the Council of Representatives. UNAMI remains concerned about weaknesses and gaps in the bill, including its failure to abolish honour as grounds of mitigation for crimes of violence committed against family members. On 5 December, the Iraqi Women's Network issued a statement condemning two bills, one on personal status and the other on the administration of justice, as contravening the rights of women and girls as stipulated in the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and the Convention on the Rights of the Child, to which Iraq is a party. UNAMI, in partnership with the Iraqi journalists' syndicate, conducted training for women journalists on 3 and 4 December in Baghdad. The training focused on reporting domestic and other forms of gender-based violence.

40. During the current reporting period, the number of documented cases of grave violations against children increased compared with the previous period. The country task force on monitoring and reporting, which is co-chaired by UNAMI,

verified 343 child casualties (76 dead and 267 injured) during the last quarter of 2013. Most casualties were the result of waves of coordinated attacks by armed groups using terror tactics. The fact that children are being killed or injured in assassinations or house raids targeting prominent members of their families is also of growing concern. An increasing number of attacks or threats of attacks against education and medical personnel was recorded. As at 31 December, 391 children, 18 of which were girls, were being held in detention facilities under article 4 of the Anti-Terrorism Law. A formal mechanism for collaboration on child protection between the task force and the Government remains to be established.

Camp New Iraq and Camp Hurriya

41. On 26 December, rockets were launched on Baghdad International Airport. A number of the rockets landed on Camp Hurriya, killing two residents; two more people subsequently died from health conditions suspected to have been exacerbated by the attack. At least another 40 residents suffered minor injuries. A number of police and Iraqi security forces personnel were also reported to have been wounded in the attack.

42. To date, 696 small T-walls, 409 bunkers and 90,000 sandbags have been permitted into the camp. The Government of Iraq has agreed to the residents' request for large T-walls to be placed inside Camp Hurriya. In addition, more than 1,488 large T-walls have been brought into the camp and 10 of the 15 assembly areas have been surrounded with large T-walls.

43. Despite several calls by UNAMI, the Government of Iraq has yet to publish the findings of its inquiry into the 1 September attack on Camp New Iraq, which left 53 people dead, and to ascertain the fate of the seven residents who were allegedly kidnapped during that attack.

44. United Nations monitors in Camp Hurriya have continued to receive reports from residents claiming abuses of their human rights by the camp's leadership. Such claims include restriction of movement within the camp, forced self-criticisms, the prevention of contact with family members inside and outside the camp, the restriction of access to medical care and the prohibition of interaction with monitors.

45. Approximately 3,153 residents have been registered with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 2,487 of whom have undergone in-depth interviews with UNHCR. A total of 1,706 individuals have been determined to have international protection needs.

46. The United Nations continues to seek durable solutions for the residents through resettlement, consular and humanitarian channels. To date, 327 individuals have been relocated outside Iraq. Of that total, 106 individuals have been relocated through consular readmission to eight countries, 207 individuals have been relocated through humanitarian admission to three countries and 14 individuals have been relocated through resettlement channels.

47. On 5 January, I appointed Jane Hall Lute my Special Adviser for the Relocation of Camp Hurriya Residents Outside of Iraq. The Special Adviser has worked extensively with a wide range of stakeholders to explore relocation opportunities for the camp's residents. From 14 to 21 February she visited Geneva, Brussels, Tirana and Baghdad to discuss potential relocation arrangements with key

governmental officials, United Nations agencies and other stakeholders. On 28 January, the Government of Iraq approved a contribution of $500,000 to the United Nations trust fund for the relocation of camp residents outside Iraq.

D. Humanitarian assistance and development

48. Iraq is facing a humanitarian crisis caused by the developments in the Syrian Arab Republic and Anbar governorate, in addition to having to address the plight of over 1 million internally displaced persons from previous waves of displacement. At the time of writing, 222,574 Syrian refugees had been registered in Iraq, over 41 per cent of whom were women. The Syrian-Iraqi border at Peshkhabour in the Kurdistan Region reopened between 5 and 13 January, enabling nearly 5,000 Syrians to cross into the Kurdistan Region. The Kurdistan Regional Government estimates that $1.6 billion will be required until the end of 2014 to meet the needs of refugees. The sixth update to the regional response plan for the Syrian crisis, launched by UNHCR and its partners on 16 December, included an appeal for $552 million for Syrian refugees in Iraq and estimates that the total number of Syrian refugees in Iraq will increase to 400,000 by the end of 2014.

49. On 14 January, I visited the Kawrgosik refugee camp in Erbil governorate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, Antonio Guterres, and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Valerie Amos. I thanked the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government for their generosity in accommodating the refugees and urged them to keep the borders open for Syrian asylum seekers while pledging continued United Nations assistance.

50. The United Nations has worked closely with the Kurdistan Regional Government in undertaking a comprehensive programme in preparation for winter. By the end of January, UNHCR had completed the distribution of core relief items for winter in all camps and at non-camp locations. The World Food Programme (WFP) had delivered food to over 120,000 people by November (50,000 food parcels and 70,000 food vouchers), expanding its operations by more than 450 per cent over the course of the year. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) implemented a back-to-school campaign in five refugee camps and communities, reaching approximately 124,000 refugees outside camps and 29,000 refugees inside camps. From October to December, UNDP assisted with the establishment of legal help desks staffed by government representatives in all camps in Erbil, Dohuk and Suleymaniya and in 13 other governorates.

51. In assisting them to integrate, in January WFP provided 76,000 refugees with food vouchers redeemable in local stores, thereby injecting over $18 million into the local economy. During the reporting period, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), in partnership with the Kurdistan Regional Government, implemented a technical and vocational education programme that included entrepreneurship and information technology training, to assist camp-based youth in accessing local employment opportunities. UNHCR implemented 105 quick-impact projects aimed at improving basic services for the host communities and the refugees they are accommodating.

52. UNICEF and the World Health Organization (WHO), in partnership with the Government of Iraq, have developed an emergency response plan to address the risk

of the polio outbreak in the Syrian Arab Republic spreading to Iraq. WHO established a polio early-warning system in all camps, by which it has been possible to detect and mitigate the risk of epidemics. Between October and December, UNICEF supported the Ministry of Health in vaccinating against polio 1.9 million children in high-risk areas in Anbar, Erbil, Dohuk, Suleymaniya, Ninewa, Najaf, Karbala and Salah al-Din governorates. Through the joint efforts of United Nations agencies and the Government, over 5 million Iraqi children and Syrian refugee children received routine immunization in December.

53. My Special Representative, in consultation with the United Nations country team in the Syrian Arab Republic, has advocated the opening of a humanitarian air corridor between Iraq and the Syrian Arab Republic to restock depleted supplies. From 10 to 29 December, through 12 flights from Erbil to Qamishli, 300 tons of humanitarian aid was delivered, equal to a one-month food supply for 30,000 people, enabling conflict-affected people in Al-Hasakeh governorate to access relief supplies for the first time in five months. A second round of airlift assistance took place between 4 and 26 February. At the time of writing, 382 tons of various commodities, 77 cubic metres of winter clothes and soap and 24 cubic metres of cleaning powder and hygiene kits had already been delivered.

54. The recent outbreak of conflict in Anbar governorate has resulted in a large number of internally displaced persons. Government figures indicate that 406,608 persons had registered as displaced at the time of drafting the present report. The security operations have limited access to the conflict-affected population, hampering comprehensive needs assessments and relief efforts. The displaced are housed in government buildings, including schools, open fields and even cars. Hospitals and health centres have run out of medical supplies and doctors have been unable to get to health facilities. Power has been disrupted, affecting water supplies. Markets are not functioning and food supplies have been significantly depleted.

55. The humanitarian component of the country team has mounted relief operations to accessible areas. At the time of drafting the present report, humanitarian assistance in the form of food, water, sanitation kits, emergency health kits and tents was being provided to accessible families in Ramadi and Fallujah. Stocks intended for Syrian refugees have been diverted and reserves utilized. The Central Emergency Response Fund has provided $5 million to meet the most immediate and critical needs of 120,000 beneficiaries. A response plan is being prepared with a view to securing $103.7 million to meet the needs of 240,000 beneficiaries for a period of six months. My Special Representative and my Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator have held a series of meetings with the Government to identify urgent needs and areas where the United Nations could assist. On 19 January, my Special Representative met with the Committee for the Anbar Crisis of the Office of the Prime Minister to advocate the establishment of humanitarian corridors. During the meeting, the Committee approved an agreement between the Ministry of Defence and UNAMI to guarantee safe passage of United Nations convoys in areas under the control of Iraq security forces.

56. On 12 January, my Special Representative and the Deputy Prime Minister of Iraq, Rowsch Shaways, co-chaired high-level discussions between the United Nations country team and the Government of Iraq on the preparation of a United Nations Development Assistance Framework for Iraq for 2015-2019. Participants in

the meeting underlined the Framework's importance in facilitating social cohesion and agreed to limit its scope by targeting the most critical development needs of Iraq. Both sides also stressed and agreed that the partnership between the United Nations and the Government of Iraq should be based on, among other things, the status of Iraq as an upper-middle-income country in a complex situation wherein Iraq is in a position to finance and manage its own development needs but needs to strengthen its capacity to deliver in challenging circumstances.

57. On 24 November, my Deputy Special Representative/Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator finalized a memorandum of understanding with the Kurdistan Regional Government establishing a partnership fund. The fund, which amounts to $19 million for 2014, is to finance United Nations support for the implementation of the Kurdistan Region development strategy. Similar mechanisms are being explored with the Government of Iraq and various governorates.

58. On 18 December, Vice President Khudayr al-Khuzai endorsed the Charter of Cooperation between Public Authorities and Non-Governmental Organizations, which was formulated with the support of UNOPS. The Charter provides a framework for coordination between the Government of Iraq and civil society, to create greater demand for good governance. To this effect, a project on building a partnership between Iraqi civil society and public authorities was launched in January. By December, UNDP had supported the finalization of a strategic plan for the Council of Representatives' secretariat aiming at strengthening the effectiveness of the Council's procedures and processes; the plan is scheduled to be approved by the Speaker of the Council by March, for subsequent implementation.

59. The conduct of a national census remains overdue despite the fact that all technical preparations were completed in 2011. In January, the Central Statistical Organization released the preliminary results of a large-scale survey involving approximately 310,000 households, done with support from the United Nations Population Fund. The results provide detailed data on households socioeconomic status and on maternal health (i.e. maternal mortality dropped from 84 per 100,000 to 35 per 100,000 between 2006 and 2012 and the mortality rate of infants under 1 year of age dropped from 50 per 1,000 to 21 per 1,000 between 1990 and 2012).

60. On 4 and 5 December, the Ministry of the Environment, with support from the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and UNESCO, produced a national framework for drought risk management and for combating sand and dust storms. The framework identifies the priority actions required to mitigate drought-related risks and combat dust storms and desertification in an integrated manner.

61. Support for an effective social protection system continues to be a priority for the United Nations in Iraq. WHO has supported the Ministry of Health in developing the first national health policy for Iraq, with cost estimates. The policy, which was approved by the parliamentary Health and Environment Committee on 14 January, offers a national framework for regulating the health sector, including for the provision of private health services. On 31 December, WFP provided the Ministry of Labour and Social Affairs training on database management, which is critical for strengthening the targeting and financial management of the public distribution system.

62. During the reporting period, UNESCO supported the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research to produce harmonized rules of procedure for technical colleges, institutes and vocational schools, with the aim of improving the quality of higher education by emphasizing core values, applying a code of conduct and enforcing academic integrity.

Security and operational issues

63. The deteriorating security environment has prompted the United Nations to take mitigating measures, including restrictions on movement. United Nations operations in Iraq are re-assessed on a continuous basis.

64. It has not yet been possible to conclude a status-of-mission agreement for UNAMI. The adjustments proposed by the United Nations to the draft agreement remain under consideration by the Government. The absence of such an agreement continues to significantly hamper the effectiveness of United Nations operations. Cumbersome entry and exit procedures for United Nations personnel continue to exist, affecting, in particular, the normal rotation and deployment of United Nations guard unit troops.

IV. Observations

65. I wish to bring to the attention of the Security Council the gravity of the political and security challenges, which, unless they are addressed soon, may have devastating and lasting implications for the country's long-term stability. The lead-up to the elections and the ensuing government formation process will be an important test for the maturity of the political process. Should lack of trust continue to prevail among key parties, the credibility of the election process may be affected adversely, leading to further violence and increasing instability on the ground. These challenges are compounded by rising tensions in relations between Iraq and some of its neighbours in the region.

66. I remain deeply concerned about the deteriorating security situation in Iraq, in particular in the governorate of Anbar, which has resulted in a new wave of internal displacement throughout the country. I strongly condemn the senseless killing of innocent Iraqi women, children and men by terrorists and other armed opposition groups. The challenges facing Iraq require all political, religious and civic leaders to fulfil their responsibilities in overcoming this current crisis in a unified manner. A national dialogue among the political forces of the country is more urgent than ever.

67. I fully support the Government's fight against terrorism and appeal to national and local institutions and actors to forge an effective partnership in restoring law and order in Anbar and to stem the spread of violence to other parts of the country. In the meantime, I encourage the Government to exercise restraint in carrying out military operations and further urge federal and local actors to do everything possible to protect civilians in accordance with international humanitarian and human rights law.

68. The humanitarian situation in Anbar is of serious concern, as residents are caught up in the fighting and more than 360,000 people have been displaced. I commend the determination and efforts of all humanitarian actors to deliver relief aid to the conflict-affected people in Anbar and elsewhere despite difficulties on the

ground and for their cooperation with United Nations agencies. I urge the Government of Iraq, in collaboration with local authorities, to facilitate the formation of safe-access corridors to enable the provision of humanitarian assistance to residents. The United Nations will continue to work with the Government and local authorities to deliver aid to those in need. I further call upon the Ministry of Displacement and Migration, as well as local authorities, to support displaced residents in the registration process and to provide them with essential items and basic services.

69. Rising insecurity in parts of Iraq, in particular in Ninewa, Salahadine, Baghdad and Kirkuk, is of serious concern. It is paramount that the Government and the leaders of Iraq work together to prevent any instability that may arise from a further deterioration in the security situation. This requires that all legitimate national and local actors engage in an all-inclusive political process and a profound national reconciliation dialogue, as well as in activities promoting strong democratic processes and institutions, respect for the rule of law and human rights, and inclusive development.

70. I call on members of the international community to support the efforts of Iraq to stem the spread of terrorism. These efforts should be consistent with the provisions of the United Nations Global Counter-Terrorism Strategy, which cover all dimensions of terrorist activity.

71. It is vital that democratic processes in Iraq prevail despite the security challenges. I strongly encourage the political leadership to remain committed to holding the parliamentary elections throughout Iraq on 30 April and to working together to ensure a campaigning period that is devoid of divisive statements and focused instead on the future of the country.

72. I hope for an early formation of the Kurdistan Regional Government and encourage all parties involved to ensure that the governorate council elections in the Kurdistan Region, also scheduled for 30 April, are concluded successfully. UNAMI will continue to provide support to the Independent High Electoral Commission. I urge all relevant parties to resume efforts to expedite governorate elections in Kirkuk, as those elections are long overdue.

73. I take note of the progress made thus far in negotiations on oil and gas revenue-sharing undertaken by the Government of Iraq and the Kurdistan Regional Government. The whole of Iraq will benefit from a robust and transparent agreement that formalizes the equitable distribution of budget allocations derived, in part, from oil and gas exports. Over the past few months, my Special Representative and Deputy Special Representatives have encouraged a dialogue between both governments with the aim of reaching a constructive and amenable settlement. In the spirit of compromise, I call upon both governments to remain steadfast in their pursuit of this goal. I urge them to intensify their efforts to negotiate an agreement on all outstanding issues, including oil exports and a budget, and to formalize these agreements into the finalization and enactment of draft laws on hydrocarbons and revenue-sharing. Doing so will further enhance cooperation and reflect a commonly shared commitment to the Iraqi Constitution while strengthening the fabric of Iraqi federalism.

74. I am pleased that relations between Iraq and Kuwait continue to improve and hope that this positive development will lead to the enhancement of relations between Iraq and its other neighbours, which is in the interest of regional stability.

75. I urge the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to ensure the integrity of the criminal justice system by ensuring respect for due process and fair trial standards as required by international law and the Constitution of Iraq. I hope that the agreement between UNAMI and the Ministry of the Interior on the Mission's unfettered access to monitor places of detention under the Ministry's authority will be concluded soon. I appeal again to the Government of Iraq to impose a moratorium on the implementation of the death penalty, in accordance with relevant General Assembly resolutions.

76. I reiterate my appeal to Member States to contribute to a durable solution with regard to the relocation of Camp Hurriya residents outside of Iraq by accepting residents into their territories and contributing to the United Nations trust fund established for that purpose. I urge the Government of Iraq to do its utmost to ensure the safety and security of Camp Hurriya residents before the full completion of the relocation process.

77. I am disappointed about the continued absence of a status-of-mission agreement. I once again call for the support of the Government of Iraq in swiftly ensuring the finalization, signing and entry into force of the status-of-mission agreement for UNAMI without further delay.

78. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to my Special Representative, Nickolay Mladenov, as well as to all the United Nations staff for their hard work, dedication and perseverance as they operate, often under very challenging circumstances, to support the people and Government of Iraq.